

# JOURNAL of the NORTHERN RENAISSANCE

<http://northernrenaissance.org> | ISSN: 1759-3085



Published under an Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported Creative Commons License.

You are free to share, copy and transmit this work under the following conditions:

- Attribution — You must attribute the work to the author, and you must at all times acknowledge the Journal of the Northern Renaissance as the original place of publication (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).
- Noncommercial — You may not use this work for commercial purposes.
- No Derivative Works — You may not alter, transform, or build upon this work.

Translating Surfaces: Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, 1599-1989

Liz Oakley-Brown

[1] Andrzej Krauze's artwork for Tim Albery's 1989 Old Vic production of Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (c. 1599) crafts a striking perspective of the play.[1] His illustration of printed ink on paper fusing skinscape and landscape – the contours of a finely fashioned (feminine?) profile resemble a sparse green-spiked forest encircled by a smooth hirsute hinterland – nimbly captures the comedy's famous dramatisation of unstable borders, margins and frames. Krauze's textural design, however, simultaneously raises questions about *As You Like It's* engagement with the surface: that 'boundary condition that comes into being through the active relation of two or more distinct entities or conditions,...The *sur-face*, as a facing above or upon (*sur-*) a given thing' which 'refers first of all back to the thing it surfaces, rather than to a relation between two or more things' (Hookway 2014:12). The play's optical-verbal intensity is illustrated in this brief description of a woman's hand:

I saw her hand – she has a leathern hand,  
A freestone-coloured hand – I verily did think  
That her old gloves were on, but 'twas her hands,  
She has a housewife's hand – but that's no matter. (4.3.24-7)

As it oscillates between concepts of texture and colour, this quotation (to which I will return) delineates how certain surfaces are more conspicuous at certain times than at others; they 'emerge, take form, and vanish' (Amato 2013: 224). Modernism's reverence of design and phenomenology's interest in embodied experience, for example, articulate specific twentieth-century discourses of superficiality; postmodernism's disavowal of depth and political ecology's understanding of 'vibrant matter and lively things' (Bennett 2010: viii) delineate later outward-looking approaches. With a nod to their cultural and political significance, Joseph A. Amato suggests that 'human history can be written as the story of human recognition and control of both natural surfaces and made and designed surfaces' (2013: 197). My contribution to this special issue on *Scrutinizing Surfaces in Early Modern Thought* considers a marked Elizabethan publication of the word 'surface' and what I will suggest is a telling neglect in *As You Like It*. In so doing, I explore how a comparison of Shakespeare's late sixteenth-century play and Paul Czinner's 1936 cinematic adaptation help illuminate the ideological significance of the surface by way of four principal properties – stage, skin, stone and screen – and the importance of its visibility for appraising 'human history' in different epochs and media.

**Stage**

[2] In the last decade of Elizabeth I's reign, a quotidian sense of the term surface had still to settle. By contrast with the Euclidean idea of 'superficies', defined in John Dee's 'Mathematical Preface' to *The elements of geometrie* as 'A broade magnitude' (Billingsey (tr.) 1570: a5'),[2] the OED insinuates that the word 'surface' (etymologically allied with the fourteenth-century French term meaning the 'outermost boundary of any material object') first enters the English language via Thomas Bowes' 1594 translation of Pierre de la Primaudaye's *The second part of the French academie* containing '*a naturall historie of the bodie and soule of man*'. [3] In his address to the book's 'Christian Reader', Bowes writes that 'Seneca the Philosopher reporteth...that the looking glasse was first invented to this end, that man might use it as a meane to know himself the better by (a5')'. [4] The translator ('a devout Puritan') (Boro 2004: para 1)) discusses the fabric of the reflective, but reductive, classically-inspired material 'looking glasse' which 'doth represent unto our eyes only so much of the *surface* of our own bodies as is directly before it' (my emphasis). Bowes thus establishes *The second part of the French academie* – 'a prose compendium of scientific, moral and philosophical knowledge' (Gillespie 2001: 277) – as a Protestant speculum which 'will in most evident maner represent unto us not only the outward members of mans body both before and behind and on every side, but even the most hidden

and inward parts thereof (a5<sup>r</sup>; my emphasis). While Bowes' Elizabethan text is exceptional for the ways in which the words 'surface' and 'bodies' are brought into close proximity, *The second part of the French academie* is clearly interested in pushing past the human form to understand the transcendent self. Indeed, the translator's swift but noteworthy use of the term surface underscores the 'depth ontology' (Miller 2010: 16) inherent in sixteenth-century Christian-humanist thought. However, if Bowes is skeptical of the 'looking glasse' as a useful device, the work of seventeenth-century microscopists such as Anthony van Leeuwenhoek, Robert Hooke and Marcello Malpighi alongside Galileo Galilei's telescopic observations 'took the human mind, eye and hand below the surface of things and toward the outer horizons of space' (Amato 2013: 128).<sup>[5]</sup> 'Probably written at the end of 1598, perhaps first performed early in 1599, and first printed in the First Folio in 1623' (Dusinberre 2006: 1), *As You Like It* is produced in the midst of these linguistic, intellectual and ocular shifts. In what follows I argue that Shakespeare's play presents a perceptive exploration – before (or aside from) the letter – of how the surface is bound with the politics of selfhood.

[3] Like the Shakespearean canon in general, the play does not use the word 'surface' or 'superficies'.<sup>[6]</sup> And yet *As You Like It's* generic status as a play and its dramaturgic components scrutinize surfaces at every turn. Shakespeare, argues Michael Witmore:

used the specific resources of the theatre – that is, its physical limitations; its reliance on sound, speech and gesture; its indebtedness in performance to the passage of chronological time – to say equally specific things about the relatedness of being in the world and their mutual participation in some larger, constantly changing whole [...] in telling a story with speaking bodies and relying on their phenomenal presence to produce theatrical effects, theatre must constantly cope with the immediate meaning of sensation and the limits of any one particular body's command of space. (Witmore 2008: 6)

Viewed this way, Shakespearean drama relies on the interplay between the surfaces of the actors' bodies and stage apparatuses. In one of Shakespeare's most celebrated speeches, *As You Like It* foregrounds a provocative 'outermost boundary' for an English Protestant audience. When 'the melancholy Jaques' (2.1.41) declaims 'All the world's a stage, | And all the men and women merely players' (2.7.140-1), he employs the familiar early modern topos of the world stage (*theatrum mundi*), 'the idea that the world itself was God's theatre' (Hawkins 1966: 174). 'Men and women', Jaques continues, 'have their exits and their entrances, | And one man in his life plays many parts, | His acts being seven ages': 'infant', 'schoolboy', 'lover', 'solider', 'justice', 'pantaloon' [feeble old man], 'second childishness' (2.7.142-167). Thomas Heywood's prefatory poem to *An Apology for Actors* (1612) provides an example of the same convention:

The world's a Theater, the earth a Stage,  
Which God, and nature doth with Actors fill,  
Kings have their entrance in due equipage,  
And some there parts play well and others ill.  
[...]  
When we are borne, and to the world first enter,  
And all finde *Exits* when their parts are done.  
If then the world a Theater present,  
As by the roundnesse it appeares most fit,  
Built with starre-galleries of hie ascent,  
In which *Jehove* doth as spectator sit. (a4<sup>r</sup>-a4<sup>v</sup>)

As expected from the introduction to an extended essay concerned with defending the theatre from contemporaneous detractors, combined with Heywood's marginal comment 'no Theatre, no world' (a4<sup>v</sup>), the poem provides a more detailed yet arguably challenging depiction than Shakespeare's dramatization. While an Elizabethan audience might understand the religious discourses of resemblance inscribed in Jaques' speech – the idea

that God is the prime mover – from a twenty-first century materialist standpoint *As You Like It* also draws attention to the plane upon which human beings perform teleological patterns circumscribed by their embodied and quantifiable conditions. He begins by embracing both genders, but Jaques' 'strange eventful history' (2.7.168) ultimately offers a chronologically-ordered view of a predominantly masculine society: the stage-as-surface facilitates difference rather than resemblance.

[4] According to Amato:

Surfaces, in all their variety, define margins, set down borders, establish grids, and form interfaces. But surfaces also have openings and entrances, cracks, caves, and crevices. They abound with holes, doors, portals, entries, and windows, forming two or more realms of being. (2013: 30)

With its central figure of an exaggerated 'cross-dressed heroine' (Dusinberre 2006: 1) alongside the invocation of 'tongues in trees, 'books in the running brooks' and 'Sermons in stones' (2.1.16-17), *As You Like It* explores the heterogeneous 'realms of being' that Amato describes. Most overtly, of course, gendered bodies are reviewed via the palimpsestic portrayal of the comedy's female protagonist Rosalind who takes on the guise as a young man (Ganymede) in order to escape her uncle Duke Frederick's wrath. Played (as always on the sixteenth-century stage) by a boy actor, the cross-dressed scenario is extended when Rosalind-as-Ganymede pretends to be 'Rosalind' (3.2.409) to counsel Orlando (the object of her affection) in the pursuit of women. The unpredictable sexual politics of desire are examined further still when a shepherdess (Phoebe) becomes enamoured with Rosalind-as-Ganymede. In the words of Juliet Dusinberre, 'The part of Rosalind manifests an awareness of gender as performance' (2006: 9) which continues to the very end of the play as the Epilogue – delivered by the boy-actor playing Rosalind – emphasises artfulness:

My way is to conjure you, and I'll begin with the women. I charge you, O women, for the love you bear to men, to like as much of this play as please you. And I charge you, O men, for the love you bear to women (as I perceive by your simpering none of you hates them), that between you and the women the play may please. If I were a woman I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me, complexions that liked me and breaths that I defied not. (2006: 10-19)

The teasing conditional clause 'If I were a woman' (Epilogue, 16-17) is a final reminder that the Shakespearean actor inhabits 'a place which is not precisely masculine or feminine, where the notion of identity itself is disrupted' (Belsey 1985: 187). In one of *As You Like It's* defining episodes, a sense of the surface 'as a boundary condition' is pressed. Indeed, Rosalind/Ganymede's multi-hyphenate role cracks Jaques' androcentric perspective of the world.

[5] Robert Record's *The pathway to knowledg, containing the first principles of geometrie* (1551) describes how 'in a Globe, (whiche is a bodie rounde as a bowle) there is but one platte forme, and one bounde)' (Aiii'). While the comedy's precise provenance is uncertain, some scholars speculate that *As You Like It* was performed in the Globe Theatre (Bednarz 2013: 267), a self-consciously named building which is attendant to the same world stage topoi invoked in Jaques' speech. Like Heywood's marginalia, however, the Epilogue resists a wholly orthodox understanding of social and cultural hierarchy. 'As a playwright working in the theatre called "The Globe"', Michael Witmore explains, 'Shakespeare [...] would have been called upon to do [a] sort of metaphysical housekeeping of the universe, endowing objects, people and events with their own distinctive qualities and principles of change' (2008: 6). Hence, *As You Like It's* overarching interest in surfaces works with the playing space to tacitly interrogate rather than uphold such a singular sensibility. Although its structure is apparently round [7] – Prologue in Shakespeare's *Henry V* (c.1599) refers to the dramatic action about to take place 'Within this wooden O' (Craik 1995: Prologue 13) – the Globe Theatre encases a far more multi-faceted environment than either the world-stage

concept, Record's definition or Prologue's gesture suggests. In common with many of London's early South Bank theatres:

Inside, not outside, provided their very reason for being. What they contained, most obviously, was spectacle: many-sided galleries, surrounding the thrust stage as a focal point, gave much better sight-lines than a square structure would for viewing not only the play but other members of the audience. Extrapolating from the Fortune contract, no one in the Fortune or the 1599 Globe was more than fifty feet from an actor downstage, at the focal centre of the space. (Smith 1999: 206)

As has been comprehensively discussed, 'The most important architectural characteristic of the original Globe Theatre' is its thrust stage. Without the proscenium arch's invisible but divisive 'fourth wall', the Elizabethan amphitheatre provided a collective acting and play-going space (Soule 2005: 4). Such an immersive experience demanded a particular kind of stagecraft:

Given that the performers were surrounded by spectators on three sides, it is also certain that they had to perpetually alter the direction in which they faced, in order to maintain contact (even eye contact) with spectators on all sides (as well as above them in the galleries). (Soule 2005: 4)

While Lesley Wade Soule's account is keenly aware of the Globe Theatre's holistic environment, the description only considers horizontal and ascendant contact. Notably, there are spectators *beneath* the performers' eye-level. The groundlings' position in front of the stage, for example, engage with the play from the surface of the stage upward, a sightline stressing 'the reliance of that art upon footwork and footwear' (Korda 2015: 86). The timber platform upon which the performers stand – and upon which the audience might lean – is also accentuated. According to Bruce R. Smith, 'The 1599 Globe was an instrument to be played upon, and the key instrument was wood' (1999: 208). Linking non-human and human surfaces on a multiplicity of levels, and in the way that *As You Like It's* Epilogue suggests, the 'boundary conditions' between player, stage and spectator are not clearly, nor simply, divided.

### **Skin and Stone**

[6] In their respective use of the world stage motif, Jaques' speech and Heywood's text are concerned with the separation of theatre-related surfaces. Carla Mazzio argues that 'A word used as often as "spectator" and "audience" to describe playgoers in the Renaissance was the "assembly"' (2003: 162). She goes on to discuss how the term 'implied not only a coming together of persons, but a physical touching of bodies in space' (162), and the ways in which the dangerous agency of touch thus engaged the minds of anti-theatrical sensibilities. Stephen Gosson's *The Schoole of Abuse, Conteyning a plesaunt inuective against Poets, Pipers, Plaiers, Iesters and such like Caterpillers of a commonwealth* (1579), for instance, reasons that theatrical performance established 'straunge consortes of melody, to tickle the eare'. A play's foremost ability to physically, and erotically, stimulate the auditory organ is succeeded by a series of threatening sensations: 'costly apparel, to flatter the sight; effeminate gesture, to ravish the sence; and wanton speache, to whet desire too inordinate lust' (qtd in Mazzio 2003: 178). From Gosson's censorious viewpoint, the early modern theatre's use of unnatural music, expensive costumes, womanly behaviour and garrulity render play-going morally overwhelming. Such complex relationships between nonhuman and human matter are paralleled in *As You Like It's* plot and dramaturgy. A short but nonetheless arresting quotation from the opening act is illustrative of how the play's verbal and non-verbal signs – somatic and lithic – draw attention to the societal qualities of surfaces. Spoken by a court jester initially allied with a 'whetstone' (1.2.53: 'A shaped stone used for *giving a smooth edge to cutting tools* when they have been ground (OED; my emphasis) before he is eventually named 'Touchstone' (2.4.17: a piece of stone 'used for testing the quality of gold and silver alloys by the colour of the streak produced by rubbing them upon it (OED; my emphasis), the noteworthy line is an instruction: 'Stroke your chins and swear by your beards that I am a knave' (1.2.70-1). Given that the command is issued to

Celia (the daughter of the usurping Duke) and the increasingly multifarious figure of Rosalind (the daughter of the exiled Duke), *As You Like It's* investment in surface studies is thus made manifest in this early scene at court. According to Dusinger:

The absence of a beard announces that Rosalind and Celia are women. Yet it also draws attention to the bodies of the boys playing them [...]. The boy's hand strokes a smooth chin, where bristle would be at present unwelcome – here he is with a woman's part to perform – but ultimately welcome (2006: 11)

Will Fisher's examination of facial hair as a prosthetic marker of gender difference (2001) and Mark Albert Johnston's book-length disquisition on early modern England's fetishisation of hirsute skin (2011) are indicative of the ways in which Shakespeare's comedy connects with the topical discourses about boys, bodies and beards. Somewhat differently, Dusinger's description of *As You Like It's* fleeting, cutaneous caress foregrounds a fleshly circuit of the hand's surface meeting the chin's: object momentarily melds into subject. Nonetheless, *As You Like It* primarily observes how gender difference operates on the surface of the skin. Touchstone's inaugural scene with Celia and Rosalind fashions a 'stroke' which, if not exactly 'effeminate', can be seen as a charged Gossonian 'gesture'.

[7] As the women follow his command to 'stroke' their 'chins', Touchstone's speech is a metatheatrical moment accentuating the meeting of fleshly surfaces and touch itself. In the late twentieth century, Ashley Montagu contends that skin:

is the oldest and the most sensitive of our organs, our first medium of communication, and our most efficient protector. The whole body is covered by skin. Even the transparent cornea of the eye is overlain by a layer of modified skin. The skin also turns inward to line orifices such as the mouth, nostrils, and anal canal. In the evolution of the senses the sense of touch was undoubtedly the first to come into being. (1986: 3)

Aristotle's order of the senses might have ranked sight in pole position, but sixteenth-century England possessed a flexible attitude to the hierarchical classical sensorium.[8] Shakespeare's contemporary Michael Drayton, for example, produced a sonnet addressed 'To the Senses' (publ. 1619) which observes that touching is '(The king of senses, greater than the rest), / He yields Love up the keys unto my heart, /And tells the other how they should be blest' (qtd in Harvey 2003: 3). Drayton's poetic representation of the inward shift from touch to the heart is also alert to premodern culture's fluid treatment of the interior and external dimensions of bodies. Similarly, Thomas Newton's 1576 translation of Levinus Lemnius' popular handbook, *The touchstone of complexions generallye appliable, expedient and profitable for all such, as be desirous and carefull of their bodylye health: contayning most easie rules and ready tokens, whereby every one may perfectly try, and throughly know, as well the exacte state, habite, disposition, and constitution, of his owne body outwardly: as also the inclinations, affections, motions, and desires of his mynd inwardly* confirms the sinuous connections between sixteenth-century skins, surface and emotion. As he guides his reader from the production of hair in childhood to manhood, Lemnius' description is in accordance with details contained in the first known European publication on dermatology, Giralamo Mercurialis's *De morbis cutaneis* [On skin diseases] (1572), a book 'thoroughly Galenic in its elaboration of terms and distinctions and its focus on the skin's excremental and evacuating functions' (Connor 2004: 24).[9] Closely linked to concomitant trends in premodern humoralism (the concept that body fluids are responsible for health and disease) Lemnius' treatise tells us something about the kinds of sensuous affects at stake in Touchstone's instruction to 'Stroke your chins and swear by your beards'.

[8] The section on 'Of a hoate Complexion', for example, contains an explanation of 'why children have no beardes':

For tender age and Childhoode is bare without hayres on the bodye, or els wyth verye smal, soft and mosye hayre onelye, because eyther there be no pores in

theyr skinned for the exhalation to evaporate and grow to the bignesse of hayres, or els there wanteth effluxe and fuliginous excrement, wherewithall the small threads of the hayres, are wont to be drawn and produced oute. But when they bee come neere aboute the age of xiiii. yeares, they beginne to bourgen and shewe forth, lytle and weake. Lustye and flourishinge Age, hath hayres stronger, fuller bushed & blackishe, for that, the pores and passages then beginne to open and be enlarged: and finally stoare of fumous exhalation aboundeth in those partes of the bodye, which are apte to generate and produce hayre, as the Heade, Chinne, Arme pittes, and Privities. [...] Therefore the muche stoare and thicknes of hayre commeth of aboundaunce of humours: and the colour thereof is according as the heate is of greatnes. Therefore all those partes in mans body are most rough and hayrie, which aboude in moste heate. (41<sup>r</sup>-41<sup>v</sup>)

Connected to the pubescent development of the skin's porosity and humoral activity, *The touchstone of complexions* examines the 'partes in mans body' which are most rough and hayrie. When Lemnius turns to women, the reader is told that:

women by very same reason that yong Stryplings are, have no hayre on theyr bodyes, but be smothe and slicke skinned, savinge onelye theyr heades and crowne where their hayre groweth in marveyulous great plentye, for that the vapours do very much and abundantly ascend upward. In their other partes their skinne is smothe and unhayrye, because moysture is above heate. Saving [...] in and about theyr secrete pryvities, where also hayrinesse appeareth, such women as be greatye destrous of carnall lust and copulacion, be verye roughe and thick growen with hayre thereabout, and the more lecherous, the more hayrie and fructfull. (42<sup>v</sup>)

By comparison with men and their 'lecherous' counterparts, Elizabethan women's skin – 'smothe and slicke' – should offer scant resistance: its surface should be glossy, well-conditioned. Though commonly viewed as an archetypal Shakespearean fool who shows 'wit through parody' and offers 'criticism of the social and literary affections of the day' (Goldsmith 1953: 886-90), as the director of *As You Like It's* embedded scene Touchstone – a character whose very name is emblematic of tactility and of its determining power – illuminates the cultural significance of early modern matter and their surfaces in the play as a whole.

[9] In the wake of Rosalind's spectacular interrogation of gender, the less obviously eye-catching role of Celia provides a complementary view of the relationship between surfaces and social difference. Explaining how she will dress herself 'in poor and mean attire, / And with a kind of umber smirch my face' – (1.3.108-9), Celia's proposed concealment simultaneously depicts a revelation. Paradoxically, 'boy actors regularly applied white make-up to appear feminine and aristocratic...The boy actor playing Celia would not in fact be applying brown pigment ['umber'] to his face, but removing the white which disguised his natural boyhood' (Dusinberre 2006: 186,n.109). In this premodern example of how 'attitudes to cleanliness and dirt are...founded upon creative attempts at ordering in the social sphere' (Kelley 2013: 16), the palette of the actor's skin and its texture are crucial signs of both sexuality *and* class.

[10] From hereon, as Touchstone, Rosalind and Celia flee from court and take refuge in the Forest of Arden, the play's interest in the social significance of surfaces gathers momentum. With this shift of scene:

the structure of the dramatic action changes considerably, loosening and altering its tone. Now the play's dominant (and after III.i its only locale), Arden is the place where the hero and heroine can pursue their desires and encounter new characters and circumstances. Within this general locale, the action flows freely and episodically from place to place. Particular locations within the forest are either unspecific sites where characters happen to meet or locations identified by

an association with particular characters such as the 'campside court' of Duke Senior or, later, the area near Rosalind and Celia's cottage. Most of these tend to be associated with characters who make them their 'homes': (Soule 2005: 40)

Soul's insightful description is alert to the Forest of Arden's ductile qualities; it is a 'general locale' where 'the action flows freely and episodically from place to place'. But even (or perhaps especially) here, surfaces are significant. At the start of Act 2 (the first scene in the Forest) the audience hears the First Lord's tale about Jaques' encounter with a wounded deer:

To-day my Lord of Amiens and myself  
Did steal behind him as he lay along  
Under an oak whose antique root peeps out  
Upon the brook that brawls along this wood:  
To the which place a poor sequester'd stag,  
That from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt,  
Did come to languish, and indeed, my lord,  
The wretched animal heaved forth such groans  
That their discharge did stretch his leathern coat  
Almost to bursting, and the big round tears  
Coursed one another down his innocent nose  
In piteous chase; and thus the hairy fool  
Much marked of the melancholy Jaques,  
Stood on the extremest verge of the swift brook,  
Augmenting it with tears. (2.1.29-43)

Gabriel Egan shows how 'the touching image of the animal's big tears rolling down its face carries a fractal (that is, self-similar) miniature representation of the chase that led to its predicament, and his "leathern coat" painfully anticipates what will become of his skin if his body falls into human hands' (2006: 100). Encapsulating premodern syncretism in its recollection and anticipation of the stag's tragic timeline, all at once the First Lord's account blurs the demarcations between 'antique root' and 'wretched animal'. While this episode hints at a compassionate exchange between non-human and human beings, the emotional connection between animal and man is not securely established. As the audience listens to the means by which Jaques 'moralize(d) this spectacle...into a thousand similes' (2.1.43-5) using, as Egan tells us, 'almost entirely urban terms' (101), the First Lord's sketch expounds how he 'Stood on the extremest verge of the swift brook'. Like Act 2's later world-stage set piece, Jaques adopts an aloof position which places him apart from water, wood and animal. In an example of what Douglas Trevor calls 'scholarly melancholy' (2004: 5), Jaques evidently articulate understanding of the stag's beleaguered circumstances is aligned with humanism's desire for textual dexterity not empathy. Two acts later, when Orlando's estranged brother Oliver returns, the audience learn of another incident which took place in a similar setting:

Under an oak, whose boughs were moss'd with age  
And high top bald with dry antiquity,  
A wretched ragged man, o'ergrown with hair,  
Lay sleeping on his back: (4.3.103-6)

Whereas Jaques is viewed apart from the forest's brook and the stag's tears, Oliver's tale of his 'conversion' (4.3.135) and the siblings' reconciliation initially confounds vegetable and human existence as he describes a tree 'moss'd with age' and a 'wretched ragged man, o'ergrown with hair'. But these animate objects are not analogous. The tree's obscured bark contributes to a sagacious arboreal attitude while the man's hidden skin is indicative of social deprivation. Conspicuously, the restoration of the body's surface is aligned with Oliver's social and familial rehabilitation.

[11] Of course, Rosalind-as-Ganymede confronts and confounds gender difference. Yet the cross-dressed character's critique of Phoebe's appearance rests on a set of cultural codes inscribed in Celia's dirt-ridden disguise and Oliver's report:

I saw her hand – she has a leathern hand,  
A freestone-coloured hand – I verily did think  
That her old gloves were on, but 'twas her hands,  
She has a housewife's hand – but that's no matter. (4.3.24-7)

This episode, which Dusinberre calls 'one of the rudest moments of the play' (2006: 34), reinforces the significance of corporeal texture and colour for early modern English social identities. By contrast with the 'white hand of Rosalind' (3.2.378-9), Phoebe's 'free-stone coloured hand' delineates skin that is 'tawny-coloured, like Cotswold' (Dusinberre 2006: 304, n.25). From the cross-dressed character's perspective, smoothness and paleness are privileged terms. Yet Phoebe is also conscious of 'boundary conditions'. Her initial appearance takes the form of a 'pageant.../ Between the pale complexion of true love / And the red glow of scorn and proud disdain' (3.4.49-51) observed by Rosalind-as-Ganyede, Celia-as-Aliena and Corin, a fellow shepherd. Introduced as a type of play-within-a-play, the trio watch a scene of unrequited love between Phoebe and Silvius, her disappointed suitor. Exploiting early modern tracts which theorise how matter is 'transmitted from the lover to the eye of the beloved' (Anderson 2015: 198), Phoebe's rejection of Silvius' amorous advances is configured as a blink to protect the 'eyes, that are the frail'st and softest things/ Who shut their coward gates on atomies' (3.5.12-14). With this magnified glimpse of ocular vulnerability, the shepherdess dramatizes how early modern embodiment and emotion depend on surface interaction.

### Screen

[12] The two foregoing sections of this essay, from Touchstone's instruction to 'Stroke your chins' to Phoebe's awareness of the body's permeability, has examined some of the ways in which Shakespeare's Elizabethan play draws attention to a specifically early modern sense of the surface. In this third and final section, the discussion's focus shifts to a twentieth-century film adaptation – 'The British (Inter-Allied) adaptation...directed by Paul Czinner... (best known today for Laurence Olivier's first appearance on screen in a Shakespeare film' (Cartmell 2016: 57) – to exemplify cultural difference. Indeed, Frederick Kiesler's 1929 comment that 'film is a play on surface' (qtd in Bruno 2014: 55) helps to show how and with what effects Elizabethan theatre's meshy inclinations morph into modernism's commitment to solidified matter.

[13] Though Deborah Cartmell states that she 'would rank' Czinner's *As You Like It* as the 'worst of all of the Shakespeare films of the early sound period' (2016: 61),<sup>[10]</sup> this adaptation employs the medium's capacity for 'synchronized sound' alongside 'the newest techniques of design and cinematography' (Jackson 2006: 238) with striking effects. Russell Jackson suggests that the film:

[...] takes its place alongside the many distinguished films where the elaborate artifice by which quasi-realistic effects are produced takes the viewer into a new kind of hyper-reality, where we take pleasure in the devices themselves. (2005: para 4)

This 'elaborate artifice' begins after the opening titles.<sup>[11]</sup> The camera pans left across a cloud-strewn sky into the canopy of a living tree then descends into a fabricated orchard-come-forest which 'Publicity claimed...was 300 feet long and built across two large sound stages at Elstree, making it the largest exterior set ever constructed in a British studio' (Jackson 2005: para 2). The burnished patina of the court in the subsequent scene exacerbates this 'new kind of hyper-reality' (Figure 1a) and close-up shots capture Rosalind's tear-stained face, significantly played by a woman actor Elisabeth Bergner, as an equivalently lustred facade (Figure 1b).



**Figure 1a**



**Figure 1b**

Lazare Meerson's innovative set designs facilitate the film's modernist aesthetic. The designer explains:

Concerning perspective, each form introduced into a set should serve, through its line and surface, to establish a certain depth. It is a question of choice and elimination; choice, so as to find elements giving the greatest suggestion of depth, and elimination, so as to cut out elements extremely suggestive by their beauty but which would disturb the limited space in which a picture is made. (qtd in Bergfelder, Harris and Street 2007: 98).

Tim Bergfelder, Sue Harris and Sarah Street note that 'In *As You Like It* there are many examples' of Meerson's technique, 'including the Forest of Arden in which the careful placement of trees creates perspective which is accentuated by figures walking into the background as if the space were indeed expansive' (2007: 98). Though aesthetically impressive, Meerson's design produces a three-dimensional tessellated overlay in which humankind's mastery over matter is amplified.



Figure 2a



Figure 2b



Figure 2c

[14] In this highly-edited Shakespearean adaptation, [12] Touchstone's banter about beards at 1.2.70-1 is omitted (in fact, the character is silent until he reaches the Forest of Arden). Nonetheless, as with the early modern play, Touchstone remains an important device for understanding the film's negotiation of surfaces. Cynthia Marshall explains that 'Czinner took advantage of the cinematic medium by punctuating the fight [at 1.2.203] with Touchstone's miming of its action and by including many reaction shots' (2004: 66). In Shakespeare's comedy we hear him say that 'It is the first time that I ever heard breaking of ribs was sport for ladies' (1.2.129-30). While that line, like so many, is excised, a great deal of Orlando and Charles' cinematic struggle is focalised via the fool's movements (Figures 2a and 2c). As the contest progresses and the camera switches between the wrestlers' cutaneous contact (Figure 2b) and their onlookers, an extraordinary frame shows how Touchstone mirrors the wrestling match itself (Figure 2c). Shakespeare's 'motley critic' (Goldsmith 1953) becomes Czinner's spectator responding to, rather than commenting on, corporeal surfaces. The film was released at a time which saw 'various attempts to understand the meaningful relation between cinema and our sensate bodies' (Sobchack 2004: 54). Practical, empirical and theoretical work by Sergei Eisenstein, the Payne Studios, Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer, for instance, considered film 'a sensuous and bodily form of perception' (Sobchack 2004: 52-5). More recently, and in opposition to 'ocularcentric paradigm[s]' (Elsaesser and Hagener 2010: 109), late twentieth-century thinkers such as Laura Marks have examined the ways in which 'vision itself can be tactile' (Marks 2000: xi). Czinner's film of the skin thus seems proleptic of Marks' later theorisation in *The Skin of the Film* which:

offers a metaphor to emphasize the way film signifies through its materiality, through a contact between perceiver and object represented... to think of film as a skin acknowledges the effect of a work's circulation among different audiences, all of which mark it with their presence. The title is meant to suggest polemically that film (and video) may be thought of as impressionable and conductive, like skin. I mean this both to apply to the material of film [...] and also to the institution of cinema and cinema-going. (2000: xi-xii)

For of all of its phenomenal potential, Czinner's *As You Like It* wraps up as it began, with modernity's 'immersion in the primacy of surface' (Cheng, 2011: 10). And yet the concluding scenes go beyond the period's aesthetic principles.

[15] Ultimately, it is impossible to ignore the political backdrop of Czinner's Shakespearean adaptation. As Austrian Jewish refugees (Dusinberre 2006: 70) both the director and Bergner 'had fled Nazi Germany' in 1933 (Jackson 2005: 61; Dusinberre 2006: 70) and the film premiered in Britain on 3 September 1936 [13] – exactly three years before the declaration of war by France and the United Kingdom following Germany's invasion of Poland. S. S. Prawer observes that 'it is surely significant' that *As You Like It's* narrative is initiated by despotism and exile: This is, of course, the play whose hero and heroine are driven from their home by a tyrannous and unjust decree, and find hospitable refuge in a friendly tolerant society' (2005: 188). With this context in mind, the plot's separation from *As You Like It's* self-reflexive coda – quite literally – by a gate marked 'Epilogue' (Figure 3a) seems emblematic of twentieth-century Europe's social and political division. As we have seen, the Elizabethan play ends with the 'ambiguous figure who no longer has a single name or sexual identity combining in one nature Rosalind, Ganymede, and the boy who played their parts' (Rackin 1987: 36). On stage, such equivocal surface tensions are 'impossible to

recreate in modern performances with women actors in the part' (Kemp 2010: 74). Likewise, Czimmer's *As You Like It* has difficulty in representing those premodern sexual imprecisions. Russell Jackson describes how 'The film's epilogue in which Bergner mutates from Rosalind (in her wedding finery) into Ganymede and then back again, engages playfully with the medium's hesitation between going beyond the stage's capabilities and invoking its status' (2006: 239; Dusing 2006: 346, n.9). It is in this hesitancy that Czimmer's *As You Like It* relinquishes any residual debt to the early modern principles of *theatrum mundi*. Rather than leaving the cinema audience with the Elizabethan theatre's composite and connected ambience, the film can only iterate societal and superficial difference (Figures 3b and 3c). In the form of a gradually closing barrier, the surface – that 'boundary condition' – takes shape on screen.



Figure 3a



Figure 3b



Figure 3c

As an Austrian Jewish actor reaches out to their spectators, Phoebe's depiction of 'eyes' as 'coward gates' (3.5.12-13) seems transposed into a wholly different kind of embodied separation.

### Conclusion

[16] Almost fifty years ago, Michel Foucault opened his Preface to the highly influential *The Order of Things* (tr. 1970) with a reference to Jorge Luis Borges' essay 'The Analytical Language of John Wilkins' (1941) which discusses a fabulous taxonomy of animals in a supposed Chinese encyclopedia. In the words of Foucault:

This book first arose out of a passage in Borges, out of the laughter that shattered, as I read the passage, all the familiar landmarks of my thought – *our* thought that bears the stamp of our age and our geography – breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things, and continuing long afterwards to disturb and threaten with collapse our age-old distinction between Same and Other. (1970: xv)

Before Foucault and Borges, Shakespeare's comedy negotiates 'ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things'. Produced alongside vernacularity's burgeoning interest in the word, yet without invoking the term 'surface' itself, *As You Like It* turns on the analysis of 'outermost boundaries' which shape division between 'the Same and the Other'. In both the form of a play and its twentieth-century cinematic adaptation, Shakespeare's comedy provides some insight of how surfaces facilitate the cultural and the political order and yet how easily their significance can be manipulated and eventually overlooked.

*Lancaster University*

### NOTES

This essay has had a long gestation period and I have benefited immeasurably from numerous formal and informal discussions. In particular, I would like to thank Alison Findlay with whom I convened the panel on 'Shakespearean Surfaces' for the 2007 British Shakespeare Association and co-organised the 2012 British Shakespeare Conference *Shakespeare Inside-Out: Depth/Surface/Meaning*. I would also like to thank Rebecca

Coleman for her theoretical insights during our 2013 conference *Theorising Surfaces* and beyond. Last but not least, I thank Kevin Killeen, Hilary Hinds and the anonymous readers of this article for their extremely encouraging and helpful comments.

[1] A digitized image can be accessed via the ‘Theatre and Performance Collection’, *The Victoria and Albert Museum* <<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1166629/poster-krauze-andrzej>> [date accessed 27 April 2017]. All quotations from Shakespeare’s play are from Juliet Dusinberre (ed.), 2006. **[back to text]**

[2] The OED suggests that the term ‘superficies’ was often used in premodern texts concerned with measurement e.g. ‘The extremes or limites of a bodye, are superficiesses’, in *The elements of geometrie of the most auncient philosopher Euclide of Megara. Faithfully (now first) translated into the Englishe toung, by H. Billingsley, citizen of London* (1570: i.2<sup>r</sup>). **[back to text]**

[3] I was reminded of the OED definition of ‘surface’ in Forsyth et al. 2013: 1015. However, a search on a digitized resource such as Early English Books Online (EEBO) or Lancaster University’s Corpus Query Processor (CQPweb) shows the term extant in the 1580s. I would like to thank Kevin Killeen for refining this point. **[back to text]**

[4] When citing premodern texts from their original sources, I have modernised i/j and u/v, and have silently expanded contractions. **[back to text]**

[5] For a detailed discussion of vision’s significance in the period see Stuart Clark (2007). **[back to text]**

[6] I would like to acknowledge Lawrence Green, “‘This loam, this rough-cast and this stone’: Walls both ‘wicked’ and ‘courteous’ in Shakespeare’s plays’ and Lucy Razzall, ‘The other syde of the lefe’: Titles, Pages, Surfaces and the Early Modern Material Text’, *Scrutinizing Surfaces in Early Modern Thought* (Lancaster, UK, 8-9 May 2015). Both talks considered Shakespeare’s lack of engagement with the term ‘surface’. According to *Open Source Shakespeare’s* ‘Concordance, the nearest equivalent terms are ‘superficial’ and ‘superficially’ <http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/concordance/> [date accessed 15 March 2017] **[back to text]**

[7] Based on ‘dimensions projected from partial excavations of the site in 1989, the Globe was a twenty-sided polygon 99 feet in diameter’ (Smith 2009: 210). **[back to text]**

[8] On the orthodox order of the senses see Andrew Gurr’s discussion of Andreas du Laurens, *A Discourse of the Preservation of the Sight...* trans. by Richard Surphlet (1599) (1996: 89). **[back to text]**

[9] See Tanya Pollard for the ways in which ‘over the course of the period, the notion of healthy permeability gradually gave way to fantasies of the body as an impenetrable fortress, sealed off from the world through a protective and vigilantly guarded cover’ (2010: 112). **[back to text]**

[10] Kalem (1908) and Vitagraph (1912) produced silent versions. **[back to text]**

[11] A public domain copy of the film can be accessed here: <<https://archive.org/details/AsYouLikeIt1936>> **[back to text]**

[12] Lesley Wade Soule’s individual timings for each scene add up to a running time for the whole play of approximately 138 minutes (2005: 46-124). Czimmer’s film is 96 minutes long. **[back to text]**

[13] This information is from the *IMDb* website  
<[http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0027311/releaseinfo?ref\\_=tt\\_dt\\_dt](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0027311/releaseinfo?ref_=tt_dt_dt)> [date  
accessed 2 April 2017].[\[back to text\]](#)

## WORKS CITED

- Amato, Joseph. A. 2013. *Surfaces: A History* (London: University of California Press)
- Anderson, Miranda. 2015. *The Renaissance Extended Mind* (Basingstoke: Palgrave)
- Bednarz, James. P. 2013. *Shakespeare and the Poets' War* (New York: Columbia University Press)
- Belsey, Catherine. 1985. 'Disrupting Sexual Difference: Meaning and Gender in the Comedies' in *Alternative Shakespeares*, edited by John Drakkakis (London: Methuen), pp. 166-90
- Bennett, Jane. 2010. *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press)
- Bergfelder, Tim, Sue Harris and Sarah Street. 2007. *Film Architecture and the Transnational Imagination: Set Design in 1930s Europe* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press)
- Boro, Joyce. 2008. 'Bowes, Thomas (fl. 1579–1589)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press:  
<<http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.lancs.ac.uk/view/article/3060>>
- Bowes, Thomas (trans.). 1594. *The second part of the French academie containing a naturall historie of the bodie and soule of man* (London)
- Bruno, Giuliana. 2014. *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality and Media* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press)
- Cartmell, Deborah. 2016. 'Marketing Shakespeare Films: From Tragedy to Biopic', in *Shakespeare's Cultural Capital*, edited by Dominic Shellard and Siobhan Keenan (Basingstoke: Palgrave), pp. 57-76
- Cheng, Anne Anlin. 2011. *Second Skin: Josephine Baker and the Modern Surface* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
- Clark, Stuart. 2007. *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
- Connor, Steven. 2004. *The Book of Skin* (London: Reaktion)
- Craik, T. W. (ed). 1995. *The Arden Shakespeare: Henry V* (London: Thomson Learning)
- Dee, John. 1570. 'John Dee his Mathematicall Preface', in *The elements of geometrie of the most auncient philosopher Euclide of Megara. Faithfully (now first) translated into the Englishe tounge, by H. Billingsley* (London), \*n.p.
- Dusinberre, Juliet. (ed). 2006. *The Arden Shakespeare: As You Like It* (London: Thomson Learning)
- Egan, Gabriel. 2006. *Green Shakespeare: From Ecopolitics to Ecocriticism* (London: Routledge)
- Elsaesser, Thomas and Malte Hagener. M. 2010. *Film Theory: An Introduction Through the Senses* (London: Routledge)

- Fisher, Will. 2001. 'The Renaissance Beard: Masculinity in Early Modern England', *Renaissance Quarterly* 54.1: 155-187
- Forsyth, Isla, Hayden Lorimer, Peter Merriman and James Robinson. 2013. 'Guest Editorial: What are surfaces?', *Environment and Planning A* (45): 1013-1020
- Foucault, Michel. 1970. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Routledge)
- Gillespie, Stuart. 2001. *Shakespeare's Books* (London: Athlone Press)
- Gosson, Stephen. 1579. *The Schoole of Abuse, Containing a plesaunt inuective against Poets, Pipers, Plaiers, Iesters and such like Caterpillers of a commonwealth* (London)
- Goldsmith, Robert Hillis. (1953) 'Touchstone: Critic in Motley', *PMLA* 68.4: 884-895
- Gurr, Andrew. 1996. *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)
- Harvey, Elizabeth D. 2003. 'Introduction: The "Sense of All Senses", in *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture*, edited by Elizabeth D. Harvey (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), pp. 1-21
- Hawkins, Harriett Bloker. 1966. "All the World's a Stage": Some Illustrations of the *Theatrum Mundi*', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 17.2 : 174-178
- Hookway, Branden. 2014. *Interface* (Cambridge: The MIT Press)
- Jackson, Russell. 2005. 'Filming *As You Like It*: a playful comedy becomes a problem', *Actes des congrès de la Société française Shakespeare*, <<http://shakespeare.revues.org/656>>
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2006 'Remembering Bergner's Rosalind: *As You Like It* on film in 1936', in *Shakespeare, Memory and Performance*, edited by Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 237-255
- Jameson, Fredric. 2009. 'Afterword', in *Modernism and Theory: A Critical Debate*, edited by Stephen Ross (London: Routledge), pp. 247-251
- Johnston, Mark Albert. 2011. *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate)
- Kemp, Theresa. D. 2010. *Women in the Age of Shakespeare* (California: Greenwood Press)
- Kelley, Victoria. 2013. 'A Superficial Guide to the Deeper Meanings of Surface', in *Surface Tensions: Surface, Finish and The Meaning of Objects*, edited by Glenn Adamson and Victoria Kelley (Manchester: Manchester University Press)
- Korda, Natasha. 2015. 'How To Do Things With Shoes', in *Shakespeare and Costume*, edited by Patricia Lennox and Bella Mirabella (London: Bloomsbury), pp. 85-104
- Marks, Laura U. 2000. *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham: Duke University Press)
- Marshall, Cynthia. 2004. *Shakespeare in Production: As You Like It* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)
- Mazzio, Carla. 2003. 'Acting with Tact: Touch and Theatre in the Renaissance', in *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture*, edited by Elizabeth D. Harvey (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), pp. 159-186

- \_\_\_\_\_. 2005. 'The Senses Divided: Organs, Objects, and Media in Early Modern England', in *The Empire of the Senses*, edited by David Howes (Oxford: Berg), pp. 85-105
- Miller, Daniel. 2010. *Stuff* (London: Polity)
- Montagu, Ashley. 1986. *Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin*, 3rd edition (New York: Harper & Row)
- Newton, Thomas (trans.). 1576. *The touchstone of complexions ...* (London)
- Pollard, Tanya. 2010. 'Enclosing the Body: Tudor Conceptions of Skin', in *A Companion to Tudor Literature*, edited by Kent Cartwright (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell), pp. 111-122
- Prawer, S. S. 2005. *Between Two Worlds: The Jewish Presence in German and Austrian Film, 1910-1933* (New York: Berghahn Books)
- Record, Robert. 1551. *The pathway to knowledg, containing the first principles of geometrie* (London)
- Smith, Bruce R. 2009. *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England* (London: University of Chicago Press)
- Sobchack, Vivian. 2004. 'What My Fingers Knew: The Cinesthetic Subject, or Vision in the Flesh', in *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 53-84
- Trevor, Douglas. 2004. *The Poetics of Melancholy in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)
- Wade Soule, Lesley. 2005. *As You Like It: A Guide to the Text and Its Theatrical Life* (Basingstoke: Bloomsbury)
- Witmore, Michael. 2008. *Shakespearean Metaphysics* (London: Continuum)